

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The claims have been amended above to overcome this rejection.

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Fink et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,305,957 (hereinafter "Fink").

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). It is submitted that Fink fails to teach each and every element as set forth in claim 1 for at least the reasons described below.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite, *inter alia*, "the first housing has bearing sleeves... a pivoted lever having a bearing tab and a guide tab, ... wherein the bearing tabs of the pivoted lever are mounted in the bearing sleeves of the first housing, wherein the bearing sleeves are open in the direction opposite to the direction of plugging, wherein the first slot of the cross slider receives the lever guide tab, and wherein the first slot of the cross slider is parallel to the direction of plugging and open in the direction opposite to the direction of plugging." In other words, the claimed connector arrangement has slots/sleeves which are open in the direction opposite to the direction of plugging which receive complementary lever tabs.

In contrast, Fink merely discloses a housing (12) having a pivot pin (38) and a lever having slide pins (50) which engage with pin slot (70) and pin hole (72), wherein the pin slot (70) is open in the direction of plugging. Furthermore, Fink does not disclose any slots on either the housing or the cross slider which receive pins or tabs open in the direction opposite to the direction of plugging. Thus, Fink fails to teach that "the bearing tabs of the pivoted lever are mounted in the bearing sleeves of the first housing, wherein the bearing sleeves are open in the direction opposite to the direction of plugging, wherein the first slot of the cross slider receives the lever guide tab, and wherein the first slot of the cross slider is... open in the direction opposite to the direction of plugging" as claimed in amended claim 1.

Accordingly claim 1 is believed to be patentably distinct and nonobvious in view of Fink. Claims 2-10 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and thus include all the limitations of claim 1. Thus, claims 2-10 are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons given for claim 1.

Claims 11 and 12 have been added above to further claim the features recited therein.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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